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Demeter: a mask

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DEMETER

A MASK

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1905

*Price One Shilling
net*





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DEMETER

A MASK

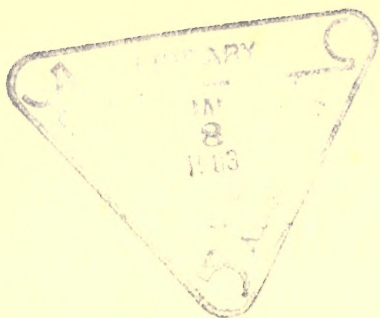
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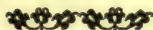
NEW YORK AND TORONTO

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DEMETER



A MASK



'Dreams & the light imaginings of men.'



ARGUMENT OF THE PLAY

THE scene is in the flowery valley below Enna. Hades prologizes, and tells how he has come with consent of Zeus to carry off Persephone to be his queen. The Chorus of Ocean nymphs entering praise Sicily and the spring. Persephone enters with Athena and Artemis to gather flowers for the festival of Zeus. Persephone being left alone is carried off by Hades.

In the second act, which is ten days later, the Chorus deplore the loss of Persephone. Demeter entering upbraids them in a choric scene and describes her search for Persephone until she learnt her fate from Helios. Afterwards she describes her plan for compelling Zeus to restore her. Hermes brings from Zeus a command to Demeter that she shall return to Olympus. She sends defiance to Zeus, and the Chorus end the scene by vowing to win Poseidon to aid Demeter.

In the third act, which is a year later, the Chorus, who have been summoned by Demeter to witness the

restoration of Persephone, lament Demeter's anger. Demeter narrates the Eleusinian episode of her wanderings, until Hermes enters leading Persephone. After their greeting Demeter hears from Hermes the terms of Persephone's restoration; she is reconciled thereto by Persephone, and invites her to Eleusis. The Chorus sing and crown Persephone with flowers.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HADES.

DEMETER.

PERSEPHONE.

ATHENA.

ARTEMIS.

HERMES.

Chorus of

OCEANIDES.



DEMETER



HADES.

I AM the King of Hell, nor prone to vex
Eternal destiny with weak complaint ;
Nor when I took my kingdom did I mourn
My lot, from heav'n expell'd, deny'd to enjoy
Its radiant revelry and ambrosial feast,
Nor blamed our mighty Sisters, that not one
Would share my empire in the shades of night.

But when a younger race of gods arose,
And Zeus set many sons on heav'nly seats,
And many daughters dower'd with new domain, 10
And year by year were multiply'd on earth
Their temples and their statu'd sanctities,
Mirrors of man's ideas that grow apace,
Yea, since man's mind was one with my desire
That Hell should have a queen,—for heav'n hath queens
Many, nor on all earth reigns any king

In unkind isolation like to me,—
 I claimed from Zeus that of the fair immortals
 One should be given to me to grace my throne.
 Willing he was, and quick to praise my rule, 20
 And of mere justice there had granted me
 Whome'er I chose: but 'Brother mine,' he said,
 'Great as my power among the gods, this thing
 I cannot compass, that a child of mine,
 Who once hath tasted of celestial life,
 Should all forgo, and destitute of bliss
 Descend into the shades, albeit to sit
 An equal on thy throne. Take whom thou wilt;
 But by triumphant force persuade, as erst
 I conquer'd heav'n.' Said I 'My heart is set: 30
 I take Demeter's child Persephone;
 Dost thou consent?' Whereto he gave his nod.
 And I am come to-day with hidden powers,
 Ev'n unto Enna's fair Sicilian field,
 To rob her from the earth. 'Tis here she wanders
 With all her train: nor is this flow'ry vale
 Fairer among the fairest vales of earth,
 Nor any flower within this flow'ry vale
 Fair above other flowers, as she is fairest
 Among immortal goddesses, the daughter 40
 Of gentle-eyed Demeter; and her passion
 Is for the flowers, and every tenderness

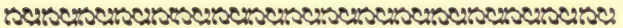
That I have long'd for in my fierce abodes.
But she hath always in attendant guard
The dancing nymphs of Ocean, and to-day
The wise Athena and chaste Artemis
Indulge her girlish fancy, gathering flowers
To deck the banner of my golden brother,
Whose thought they guess not, tho' their presence
here

Affront his will and mine. If once alone 50
I spy her, I can snatch her swiftly down ;
And after shall find favour for my fault,
When I by gentle means have won her love.

I hear their music now. Hither they come :
I'll to my ambush in the rocky cave. [Exit.



A C T · I



Enter Chorus of Oceanides, with baskets.

OCEANIDES.

Gay and lovely is earth, man's decorate dwelling ;
With fresh beauty ever varying hour to hour.
As now bathed in azure joy she awakeneth
With bright morn to the sun's life-giving effluence,
Or sunk into solemn darkness aneath the stars 60
In mysterious awe slumbereth out the night,
Then from darkness again plunging again to day ;
Like dolphins in a swift herd that accompany
Poseidon's chariot when he rebukes the waves.
But no country to mè 'neath the enarching air
Is fair as Sicily's flowery fruitful isle :
Always lovely, whether winter adorn the hills
With his silvery snow, or generous summer
Outpour her heavy gold on the river-valleys.

Her rare beauty giveth gaiety unto man, 70
 A delight dear to immortals.

2

And one season of all chiefly deliteth us,
 When fair Spring is afield. O happy is the Spring!
 Now birds early arouse their pretty minstreling;
 Now down its rocky hill murmureth ev'ry rill;
 Now all bursteth anew, wantoning in the dew
 Their bells of bonny blue, their chalices honey'd.
 Unkind frost is away; now sunny is the day;
 Now man thinketh aright, Life it is all delite.
 Now maids playfully dance o'er enamel'd meadows, 80
 And with goldy blossom deck forehead and bosom;
 While old Pan rollicketh thro' the budding shadows,
 Voicing his merry reed, laughing aloud to lead
 The echoes madly rejoicing.

3

We be Ocëanids, Persephone's lovers,
 Who all came hurrying joyfully from the sea
 Ere daybreak to obey her belovèd summons.
 At her fancy to pluck these violets, lilies,
 Windflow'rs and dafodils, all for a festival
 Whereat shé will adorn Zeuses honor'd banner. 90
 And with Persephone there cometh Artemis
 And grave Pallas . . . Hilloo! already they approach!
 Haste, haste! stoop to gather! seem busy ev'ryone!

Crowd all your wicker arcs with the meadow-lilies;
 Lest our disreverenc'd deity should rebuke
 The divine children of Ocean.

[*Enter ATHENA, PERSEPHONE, and ARTEMIS.*
Persephone has a basket half fill'd with gather'd
flowers.]

ATHENA.

These then are Enna's flowery fields, and here
 In midmost isle the garden of thy choice?

PERSEPHONE.

Is not all as I promist? Feel ye not
 Your earthborn ecstasy concenter'd here? 100
 Tell me, Athena, of thy wisdom, whence
 Cometh this joy of earth, this penetrant
 Palpitant exultation so unlike
 The balanc't calm of high Olympian state?
 Is't in the air, the tinted atmosphere
 Whose gauzy veil, thrown on the hills, will paint
 Their features, changing with the gradual day,
 Rosy or azure, clouded now, and now
 Again afire? Or is it that the sun's
 Electric beams—which shot in circling fans 110
 Whirl all things with them—as they strike the
 earth
 Excite her yearning heart, till stir'd beneath

The rocks and silent plains, she cannot hold
 Her fond desires, but sends them bursting forth
 In scents and colour'd blossoms of the spring?—
 Breathes it not in the flowers?

ATH. Fair are the flowers,
 Dear child; and yet to me far lovelier
 Than all their beauty is thy love for them.
 Whate'er I love, I contemplate my love
 More than the object, and am so rejoic'd. 120
 For life is one, and like a level sea
 Life's flood of joy. Thou wond'rest at the flowers,
 But I would teach thee wonder of thy wonder;
 Would shew thee beauty in the desert-sand,
 The worth of things unreckt of, and the truth
 That thy desire and love may spring of evil
 And ugliness, and that Earth's ecstasy
 May dwell in darkness also, in sorrow and tears.

PER. I'd not believe it: why then should we
 pluck
 The flowers and not the stalks without the flowers?
 Or do thy stones breathe scent? Would not men
 laugh 131
 To see the banner of almighty Zeus
 Adorn'd with ragged roots and straws?—Dear
 Artemis,
 How lovest thou the flowers?

ARTEMIS.

I'll love them better

Ever for thy sake, Cora ; but for me
 The joy of Earth is in the breath of life
 And animal motions : nor are flowery sweets
 Dear as the scent of life. This petal'd cup,
 What is it by the wild fawn's liquid eye
 Eloquent as love-music 'neath the moon? 140
 Nay, not a flower in all thy garden here,
 Nor wer't a thousand-thousand-fold enhanc't
 In every charm, but thou wouldst turn from it
 To view the antler'd stag, that in the glade
 With the coy gaze of his majestic fear
 Faced thee a moment ere he turn'd to fly.

PER. But why, then, hunt and kill what thou so
 lovest?

AR. Dost thou not pluck thy flowers?

PER. 'Tis not the same.

Thy victims fly for life : they pant, they scream.

AR. Were they not mortal, sweet, I could not kill
 them. 150

They kill each other in their lust for life ;
 Nay, cruelly persecute their blemisht kin :
 And they that thus are exiled from the herd
 Slink heart-brok'n to sepulchral solitudes,
 Defenceless and dishonour'd ; there to fall

Prey to the hungry glutton of the cave,
Or stand in mute pain lingering, till they drop
In their last lair upon the ancestral bones.

PER. What is it that offends me?

ATH. 'Tis Pity, child,
The mortal thought that clouds the brow of man 160
With dark reserve, or poisoning all delite
Drives him upon his knees in tearful prayer
To avert his momentary qualms: till Zeus
At his reiterated plaint grows wrath,
And burdens with fresh curse the curse of care.
And they that haunt with men are apt to take
Infection of his mind: thy mighty mother
Leans to his tenderness.

PER. How should man, dwelling
On earth that is so gay, himself be sad?
Is not earth gay? Look on the sea, the sky, 170
The flowers!

ATH. 'Tis sad to him because 'tis gay.—
For whether he consider how the flowers,
—Thy miracles of beauty above praise,—
Are wither'd in the moment of their glory,
So that of all the mounting summer's wealth
The show is chang'd each day, and each day dies,
Of no more count in Nature's estimate
Than crowded bubbles of the fighting foam:

Or whether 'tis the sea, whose azure waves
 Play'd in the same infinity of motion 180
 Ages ere he beheld it, and will play
 For ages after him;—alike 'tis sad
 To read how beauty dies and he must die.

PER. Were I a man, I would not worship thee,
 Thou cold essential wisdom. If, as thou sayst,
 Thought makes men sorrowful, why help his thought
 To quench enjoyment, who might else as I
 Revel among bright things, and feast his sense
 With beauty well-discern'd? Nay, why came ye
 To share my pastime? Ye love not the flowers. 190

ATH. Indeed I love thee, child; and love thy
 flowers,—

Nor less for loving wisely. All emotions,
 Whether of gods or men, all loves and passions,
 Are of two kinds; they are either inform'd by wisdom,
 To reason obedient,—or they are uncondacted,
 Flames of the burning life. The brutes of earth
 And Pan their master know these last; the first
 Are seen in me: betwixt the extremes there lie
 Innumerable alloys and all of evil.

PER. Nay, and I guess your purpose with me well:
 I am a child, and ye would nurse me up 201
 A pupil in your school. I know ye twain
 Of all the immortals are at one in this;

Ye wage of cold disdain a bitter feud
 With Aphrodite, and ye fear for me,
 Lest she should draw me to her wanton way.
 Fear not: my party is taken. Hark! I'll tell
 What I have chosen, what mankind shall hold
 Devote and consecrate to me on earth:
 It is the flowers: but only among the flowers 210
 Those that men love for beauty, scent, or hue,
 Having no other uses: I have found
 Demeter, my good mother, heeds them not.—
 She loves vines, olives, orchards, 'the rich leas
 Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats, and peas,'
 But for the idle flowers she hath little care:
 She will resign them willingly. And think not,
 Thou wise Athena, I shall go unonor'd,
 Or rank a meaner goddess unto man.
 His spirit setteth beauty before wisdom, 220
 Pleasures above necessities, and thus
 He ever adareth flowers. Nor this I guess
 Where rich men only and superfluous kings
 Around their palaces reform the land
 To terraces and level lawns, whereon
 Appointed slaves are told, to tend and feed
 Lilies and roses and all rarest plants
 Fetch'd from all lands; that they—these lordly men—
 'Twixt flaunting avenues and wafted odours

May pace in indolence : this is their bliss ; 230
 This first they do : and after, it may be,
 Within their garden set their academe :—
 But in the poorest villages, around
 The meanest cottage, where no other solace
 Comforts the eye, some simple gaiety
 Of flowers in tended garden is seen ; some pinks,
 Tulips, or crocuses that edge the path ;
 Where oft at eve the grateful labourer
 Sits in his jasmin'd porch, and takes the sun :
 And even the children, that half-naked go, 240
 Have posies in their hands, and of themselves
 Will choose a queen in whom to honour Spring,
 Dancing before her garlanded with May.
 The cowslip makes them truant, they forget
 The hour of hunger and their homely feast
 So they may cull the delicate primrose,
 Sealing their birthright with the touch of beauty ;
 With unconsider'd hecatombs assuring
 Their dim sense of immortal mystery.—
 Yea, rich and poor, from cradle unto grave 250
 All men shall love me, shall adore my name,
 And heap my everlasting shrine with flowers.

ATH. Thou sayest rightly thou art a child. May Zeus
 Give thee a better province than thy thought.

[*Music heard.*

AR. Listen! the nymphs are dancing. Let us go!
[They move off.]

Come, Cora; wilt thou learn a hunting dance?
 I'll teach thee.

PER. Can I learn thy hunter-step
 Without thy bare legs and well-buskin'd feet?

AR. Give me thy hand.

PER. Stay! stay! I have left my flowers.
 I follow. 260

[Exeunt Athena and Artemis.]

[Persephone returning to right slowly.]

They understand not—Now, praise be to Zeus,
 That, tho' I sprang not from his head, I know
 Something that Pallas knows not.

*[She has come to where her basket lies. In stooping
 towards it she kneels to pluck a flower: and then
 comes to sit on a bank with the basket in hand on her
 knees, facing the audience.]*

Thou tiny flower!

Art thou not wise?

Who taught thee else, thou frail anemone,
 Thy starry notion, thy wind-wavering motion,
 Thy complex of chaste beauty, unimagin'd
 Till thou art seen?—And how so wisely, thou,
 Indifferent to the number of thy rays, 270
 While others are so strict? This six-leaved tulip,

—He would not risk a seventh for all his worth,—
 He thought to attain unique magnificence
 By sheer simplicity—a pointed oval
 Bare on a stalk erect : and yet, grown old
 He will his young idea quite abandon,
 In his dishevel'd fury wantoning
 Beyond belief . . . Some are four-leaved : this poppy
 Will have but four. He, like a hurried thief,
 Stuffs his rich silks into too small a bag— 280
 I think he watch'd a summer-butterfly
 Creep out all crumpled from his winter-case,
 Trusting the sun to smooth his tender tissue
 And sleek the velvet of his painted wings :—
 And so doth he.—Between such different schemes,
 Such widely varied loveliness, how choose ?
 Yet loving all, one should be most belov'd,
 Most intimately mine ; to mortal men
 My emblem : tho' I never find in one
 The sum of all distinctions.—Rose were best : 290
 But she is passion's darling, and unkind
 To handle—set her by.—Choosing for odour,
 The violet were mine—men call her modest,
 Because she hides, and when in company
 Lacks manner and the assertive style of worth :—
 While this narcissus here scorns modesty,
 Will stand up what she is, tho' something prim :

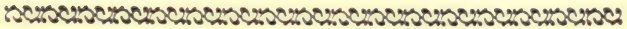
Her scent, a saturation of one tone,
Like her plain symmetry, leaves nought to fancy :—
Whereas this iris,—she outvieth man's 300
Excellent artistry ; elaboration
Confounded with simplicity, till none
Can tell which sprang of which. Coud I but find
A scented iris, I should be content :
Yet men would call me proud : Iris is Pride.—
To-day I'll favour thee, sweet violet ;
Thou canst live in my bosom. I'll not wrong thee
Wearing thee in Olympus.—Help ! help ! Ay me !

[*Persephone rises to her feet, and amidst a contrivance of
confused darkness Hades is seen rushing from behind.
He seizes her and drags her backward. Her basket
is thrown up and the flowers scattered.*]





A C T · II



CHORUS.

I (a)

Bright day succeedeth unto day—

Night to pensive night—

310

With his towering ray

Of all-fathering light—

With the solemn trance

Of her starry dance.—

Nought is new or strange

In the eternal change.—

As the light clouds fly

O'er the tree-tops high,

So the days go by.—

Ripples that arrive

320

On the sunny shore,

Dying to their live

Music evermore.—

Like pearls on a thread,—
 Like notes of a song,—
 Like the measur'd tread
 Of a dancing throng.—

(β)

Ocëanides are we,
 Nereids of the foam,
 But we left the sea
 On the earth to roam
 With the fairest Queen
 That the world hath seen.—

330

Why amidst our play
 Was she sped away?—

Over hill and plain
 We have sought in vain;
 She comes not again.—

Not the Naiads knew
 On their dewy lawns:—
 Not the laughing crew
 Of the leaping Fauns.—

340

Now, since she is gone,
 All our dance is slow,
 All our joy is done,
 And our song is woe.—

II

Saw ye the mighty Mother, where she went
 Searching the land?
 Nor night nor day resting from her lament,
 With smoky torch in hand. 350
 Her godhead in the passion of a sorrow spent
 Which not her mind could suffer, nor heart with-
 stand?—

2

Enlanguor'd like a fasting lioness,
 That prowls around
 Robb'd of her whelps, in fury comfortless
 Until her lost be found :
 Implacable and terrible in her wild distress ;
 And thro' the affrighted country her roars resound.—

3

But lo ! what form is there ? Thine eyes awaken !
 See ! see ! O say, 360
 Is not that she, the furious, the forsaken ?
 She cometh, lo ! this way ;
 Her golden-rippling hair upon her shoulders shaken,
 And all her visage troubled with deep dismay.

Enter Demeter.

DEM. Here is the hateful spot, the hollow rock
Whence the fierce ravisher sprang forth—

(seeing the nymphs) Ah! ye!

I know you well : ye are the nymphs of Ocean.

Ye, graceful as your watery names

And idle as the mimic flames

That skip upon his briny floor, 370

When the hot sun smiteth thereo'er ;

Why did ye leave your native waves ?

Did false Poseidon, to my hurt

Leagued with my foe, bid you desert

Your opalescent pearly caves,

Your dances on the shelly strand ?

CH. Poseidon gave us no command,

Lady ; it was thy child Persephone,

Whose beauty drew us from the sea.

DEM. Ill company ye lent, ill-fated guards! 380

How was she stolen from your distracted eyes ?

CH. There, where thou standest now, stood she
companion'd

By wise Athena and bright Artemis.

We in flower-gathering dance and idle song

Were wander'd off apart ; we fear'd no wrong.

DEM. In heav'n I heard her cry : ye nothing heard ?

CH. We heard no cry—How couldst thou hear in
heaven?

Ask us not of her:—we have nought to tell.—

DEM. I seek not knowledge of you, for I know.

CH. Thou knowest? Ah, mighty Queen, deign
then to tell 390

If thou hast found her. Tell us—tell us—tell!

DEM. Oh, there are calls that love can hear,
That strike not on the outward ear.

None heard save I: but with a dart
Of lightning-pain it pierc'd my heart,
That call for aid, that cry of fear.

It echo'd from the mountain-steeps
Down to the dark of Ocean-deeps;
O'er all the isle, from ev'ry hill

It pierc'd my heart and echoes still, 400
Ay me! Ay me!

CH. Where is she, O mighty Queen?—Tell us—
O tell!—

DEM. Swift unto earth, in frenzy led
By Cora's cry, from heav'n I sped.
Immortal terror froze my mind:
I fear'd, ev'n as I yearn'd to find
My child, my joy, faln from my care
Wrong'd or distrest, I knew not where,
Cora, my Cora!

Nor thought I whither first to fly, 410
 Answ'ring the appeal of that wild cry :
 But still it drew me till I came
 To Enna, calling still her name,
 Cora, my Cora !

CH. If thou hast found her, tell us, Queen, O tell !

DEM. Nine days I wander'd o'er the land.

From Enna to the eastern strand
 I sought, and when the first night came
 I lit my torch in Etna's flame.
 But neither 'mid the chestnut woods 420
 That rustle o'er his stony floods ;
 Nor yet at daybreak on the meads
 Where bountiful Symaethus leads
 His chaunting boatmen to the main ;
 Nor where the road on Hybla's plain
 Is skirted by the spacious corn ;
 Nor where embattled Syracuse
 With lustrous temple fronts the morn ;
 Nor yet by dolphin'd Arethuse ;
 Nor when I crossed Anapus wide, 430
 Where Cyane, his reedy bride,
 Uprushing from her crystal well,
 Doth not his cold embrace repel ;
 Nor yet by western Eryx, where
 Gay Aphrodite high in air

That he have pity on you, for there is need. 460
 Or let Zeus hear a strange, unwonted prayer
 That in his peril he will aid himself;
 For I have said, nor could his Stygian oath
 Add any sanction to a mother's word,
 That, if he give not back my daughter to me,
 Him will I slay, and lock his pining ghost
 In sleepy prisons of unhallowing hell.

CH. (*aside*) Alas! alas! she is distraught with
 grief.—

What comfort can we make?—How reason with
 her?— 469

(*to D.*) This could not be, great Queen. How could it be
 That Zeus should be destroy'd, or thou destroy him?

DEM. Yea, and you too: so make your prayer
 betimes.

CH. We pray thee, Lady, sit thou on this bank
 And we will bring thee food; or if thou thirst,
 Water. We know too in what cooling caves
 The sly Fauns have bestow'd their skins of wine.

DEM. Ye simple creatures, I need not these things,
 And stand above your pity. Think ye me
 A woman of the earth derang'd with grief?
 Nay, nay: but I have pity on your pity, 480
 And for your kindness I will ease the trouble
 Wherewith it wounds your gentleness: attend!

Ye see this jewel here, that from my neck
Hangs by this golden chain.

[*They crowd near to see.*

Look, 'tis a picture,

'Tis of Persephone.

CH. How?—Is that she?—

A crown she weareth.—She was never wont
Thus . . .—nor her robe thus—and her countenance
Hath not the smile which drew us from the sea.

DEM. Daedalus cut it, in the year he made
The Zibian Aphrodite, and Hephaestus 490
O'erlookt and praised the work. I treasure it
Beyond all other jewels that I have,
And on this chain I guard it. Say now: think ye
It cannot fall loose until every link
Of all the chain be broken, or if one
Break, will it fall?

CH. Surely if one break, Lady,
The chain is broken and the jewel falls.

DEM. 'Tis so. Now hearken diligently. All life
Is as this chain, and Zeus is as the jewel.
The universal life dwells first in the Earth, 500
The stones and soil; therefrom the plants and trees
Exhale their being; and on them the brutes
Feeding elaborate their sentient life,
And from these twain mankind; and in mankind

A spirit lastly is form'd of subtler sort
Whereon the high gods live, sustain'd thereby,
And feeding on it, as plants on the soil,
Or animals on plants. Now see! I hold,
As well ye know, one whole link of this chain :
If I should kill the plants, must not man perish? 510
And if he perish, then the gods must die.

CH. If this were so, thou wouldst destroy thyself.

DEM. And therefore Zeus will not believe my word.

CH. Nor we believe thee, Lady : it cannot be
That thou shouldst seek to mend a private fortune
By universal ruin, and restore
Thy daughter by destruction of thyself.

DEM. Ye are not mothers, or ye would not wonder.
In me, who hold from great all-mother Rhea
Heritage of essential motherhood, 520
Ye would look rather for unbounded passion.
Could I, the tenderness of Nature's heart,
Exist, were I unheedful to protect
From wrong and ill the being that I gave,
The unweeting passions that I fondly nurtured
To hopes of glory, the young confidence
In growing happiness? Shall I throw by
As self-delusion the supreme ambition,
Which I encourag'd till parental fondness
Bore the prophetic blessing, on whose truth 530

My spirit throve? Oh never! nay, nay, nay!
 That were the one disaster, and if aid
 I cannot, I can mightily avenge.
 On irremediable wrong I shrink not
 To pile immortal ruin, there to lie
 As trophies on a carven tomb: nor less
 For that no memory of my deed survive,
 Nor any eye to see, nor tongue to tell.

CH. So vast injustice, Lady, were not good.

DEM. To you I seem unjust involving man. 540

CH. Why should man suffer in thy feud with Zeus?

DEM. Let Zeus relent. There is no other way.

I will destroy the seeds of plant and tree:
 Vineyard and orchard, oliveyard and cornland
 Shall all withhold their fruits, and in their stead
 Shall flourish the gay blooms that Cora loved.
 There shall be dearth, and yet so gay the dearth
 That all the land shall look in holiday
 With mockery of foison; every field 549
 With splendour aflame. For wheat the useless poppy
 In sheeted scarlet; and for barley and oats
 The blue and yellow weeds that mock men's toil,
 Centaury and marigold in chequer'd plots:
 Where seed is sown, or none, shall dandelions
 And wretched ragwort vie, orchis and iris
 And garish daisy, and for every flower

That in this vale she pluckt, shall spring a thousand.
 Where'er she stept anemones shall crowd,
 And the sweet violet. These things shall ye see.
 —But I behold him whom I came to meet, 560
 Hermes:—he, be he laden howsoe'er,
 Will heavier-laden to his lord return.

Enter Hermes.

HERMES.

Mighty Demeter, Mother of the seasons,
 Bountiful all-sustainer, fairest daughter
 Of arch-ancestral Rhea,—to thee Zeus sendeth
 Kindly message. He grieves seeing thy godhead
 Offended wrongly at eternal justice,
 'Gainst destiny ordain'd idly revolting.
 Ever will he as sister honour thee
 And willing aid; but seeing now thy daughter 570
 Raised to a place on the tripartite throne,
 He finds thee honour'd duly and not injur'd.
 Wherefore he bids thee now lament no more,
 But with thy presence grace the courts of heav'n.

DEM. Bright Hermes, Argus-slayer, born of Maia,
 Who bearest empty words, the mask of war,
 To Zeus make thine own words, that thou hast
 found me
 Offended,—that I still lament my daughter,

Nor heed his summons to the courts of heav'n.

HER. Giv'st thou me nought but these relentless
words? 580

DEM. I send not words, nor dost thou carry deeds.
But know, since heav'n denies my claim, I take
Earth for my battle-field. Curse and defiance
Shall shake his throne, and, readier then for justice,
Zeus will enquire my terms: thou, on that day,
Remember them; that he shall bid thee lead
Persephone from Hades by the hand,
And on this spot, whence she was stol'n, restore her
Into mine arms. Execute that; and praise
Shall rise from earth and peace return to heav'n. 590

HER. How dare I carry unto Zeus thy threats?

DEM. Approach him with a gift: this little wallet.

[Giving a little bag of seeds.

I will not see thee again until the day

Thou lead my daughter hither thro' the gates of
Hell. *[Going.*

HER. Ah! mighty Queen, the lightness of thy gift
Is greater burden than thy weighty words.

[Exeunt severally r. and l.

CHORUS.

- (1) Sisters! what have we heard!
 Our fair Persephone, the flower of the earth,
 By Hades stolen away, his queen to be.
- (*others*) Alas!—alas!—ay me! 600
- (2) And great Demeter's bold relentless word
 To Hermes given,
 Threatening mankind with dearth.
- (*others*) Ay me! alas! alas!—
- (3 *or* 1) She in her sorrow strong
 Fears not to impeach the King of Heaven,
 And combat wrong with wrong.—
- (*others confusedly*) What can we do?—Alas!—
 Back to our ocean-haunts return
 To weep and mourn.— 610
 What use to mourn?—
 Nay, nay!—Away with sorrow:
 Let us forget to-day
 And look for joy to-morrow:—
- [(1) Nay, nay! harken to me!]
 Nay, how forget that on us too,—
 Yea, on us all
 The curse will fall.—
- [(1) Harken! I say!]
 What can we do? Alas! alas! 620
- (1) Harken! There's nought so light,

Nothing of weight so small,
 But that in even balance 'twill avail
 Wholly to turn the scale.

Let us our feeble force unite,
 And giving voice to tears,
 Assail Poseidon's ears ;
 Rob pleasure from his days,
 Darken with sorrow all his ways,
 Until his shifty mind
 Become to pity inclined,
 And 'gainst his brother turn.

630

(others) 'Tis well, thou sayest well.

(2) Yea ; for if Zeus should learn
 That earth and sea were both combined
 Against his cruel intent,
 Sooner will he relent.

(others) 'Tis well—we do it—'tis well.—

(1) Come let us vow. Vow all with one accord
 To harden every heart
 Till we have won Poseidon to our part.

640

(all) We vow—we do it—we vow.

(1) Till we have conquer'd heav'n's almighty lord
 And seen Persephone restored.

(all) We vow—we vow.

(1) Come then all ; and, as ye go,
 Begin the song of woe.

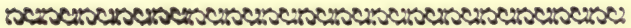
Song.

Close up, bright flow'rs, and hang the head,
Ye beauties of the plain,
The Queen of Spring is with the dead, 650
Ye deck the earth in vain.
From your deserted vale we fly,
And where the salt waves mourn
Our song shall swell their burd'ning sigh
Until sweet joy return.





A C T · III



CHORUS.

Song.

Lo where the virgin veiled in airy beams,
All-holy Morn, in splendor awakening,
 Heav'n's gate hath unbarrèd, the golden
 Aerial lattices set open.

With music endeth night's prisoning terror, 660
With flow'ry incense : Haste to salute the sun,
 That for the day's chase, like a huntsman,
 With flashing arms cometh o'er the mountain.

Inter se. That were a song for Artemis—I have heard
Men thus salute the rising sun in spring—
—See, we have wreaths enough and garlands plenty
To hide our lov'd Persephone from sight
If she should come.—But think you she will come?—
If one might trust the heavens, it is a morn

Promising happiness—'Tis like the day 670
That brought us all our grief a year ago.—

ODE.

O that the earth, or only this fair isle wer' ours
Amid the ocean's blue billows,
With flow'ry woodland, stately mountain and valley,
Cascading and liliated river ;
Nor ever a mortal envious, laborious,
By anguish or dull care opprest,
Should come polluting with remorseful countenance
Our haunt of easy gaiety.
For us the grassy slopes, the country's airiness, 680
The lofty whispering forest,
Where rapturously Philomel invoceth the night
And million eager throats the morn ;
With doves at evening softly cooing, and mellow
Cadences of the dewy thrush.
We love the gentle deer, the nimble antelope ;
Mice love we and springing squirrels ;
To watch the gaudy flies visit the blooms, to hear
On ev'ry mead the grasshopper. 689
All thro' the spring-tide, thro' the indolent summer,
(If only this fair isle wer' ours)
Here might we dwell, forgetful of the weedy caves
Beneath the ocean's blue billows.

Enter Demeter.

CH. Hail, mighty Mother!—Welcome, great Demeter!—

(1) This day bring joy to thee, and peace to man!

DEM. I welcome you, my loving true allies,
And thank you, who for me your gentle tempers
Have stiffen'd in rebellion, and so long
Harass'd the foe. Here on this field of flowers
I have bid you share my victory or defeat. 700
For Hermes hath this day command from Zeus
To lead our lost Persephone from Hell,
Hither whence she was stolen.—And yet, alas!
Tho' Zeus is won, some secret power thwarts me;
All is not won : a cloud is o'er my spirit.
Wherefore not yet I boast, nor will rejoice
Till mine eyes see her, and my arms enfold her,
And breast to breast we meet in fond embrace.

CH. Well hast thou fought, great goddess, so to
wrest 709
Zeus from his word. We thank thee, call'd to share
Thy triumph, and rejoice. Yet O, we pray,
Make thou this day a day of peace for man!
Even if Persephone be not restored,
Whether Aidoneus hold her or release,
Relent thou.—Stay thine anger, mighty goddess;

Nor with thy hateful famine slay mankind.

DEM. Say not that word 'relent' lest Hades hear!

CH. Consider rather if mankind should hear.

DEM. Do ye love man?

CH. We have seen his sorrows, Lady . . .

DEM. And what can ye have seen that I know
not?—

720

His sorrow?—Ah my sorrow!—and ye bid
Me to relent; whose deeds of fond compassion
Have in this year of agony built up
A story for all time that shall go wand'ring
Further than I have wander'd;—whereto all ears
Shall hearken ever, as ye will hearken now.

CH. Happy are we, who first shall hear the tale
From thine own lips, and tell it to the sea.

DEM. Attend then while I tell.—

729

—Parting from Hermes hence, anger'd at heart,
Self-exiled from the heav'ns, forgone, alone,
My anguish fasten'd on me, as I went
Wandering an alien in the haunts of men.
To screen my woe I put my godhead off,
Taking the likeness of a worthy dame,
A woman of the people well in years;
Till going unobserv'd, it irked me soon
To be unoccupy'd save by my grief,
While men might find distraction for their sorrows

In useful toil. Then, of my pity rather 740
 Than hope to find their simple cure my own,
 I took resolve to share and serve their needs,
 And be as one of them.

CH. Ah, mighty goddess,
 Coudst thou so put thy dignities away,
 And suffer the familiar brunt of men?

DEM. In all things even as they.—And sitting
 down
 One evening at Eleusis, by the well
 Under an olive-tree, likening myself
 Outwardly to some kindly-hearted matron,
 Whose wisdom and experience are of worth 750
 Either where childhood clamorously speaks
 The engrossing charge of Aphrodite's gifts,
 Or merry maidens in wide-echoing halls
 Want sober governance;—to me, as there
 I sat, the daughters of King Keleos came,
 Tall noble damsels, as kings' daughters are,
 And, marking me a stranger, they drew from me
 A tale told so engagingly, that they
 Grew fain to find employment for my skill;
 —As men devise in mutual recompense, 760
 Hoping the main advantage for themselves;—
 And so they bad me follow, and I enter'd
 The palace of King Keleos, and received

There on my knees the youngest of the house,
 A babe, to nurse him as a mother would :
 And in that menial service I was proud
 To outrun duty and trust : and there I liv'd
 Disguised among the maidens many months. 768

CH. Often as have our guesses aim'd, dear Lady,
 Where thou didst hide thyself, oft as we wonder'd
 What chosen work was thine, none ever thought
 That thou didst deign to tend a mortal babe.

DEM. What life I led shall be for men to tell.
 But for this babe, the nursling of my sorrow,
 Whose peevish cry was my consoling care,
 How much I came to love him ye shall hear.

CH. What was he named, Lady?

DEM. Demophoön.
 Yea, ye shall hear how much I came to love him.
 For in his small epitome I read
 The trouble of mankind ; in him I saw 780
 The hero's helplessness, the countless perils
 In ambush of life's promise, the desire
 Blind and instinctive, and the will perverse.
 His petty needs were man's necessities ;
 In him I nurst all mortal natur', embrac'd
 With whole affection to my breast, and lull'd
 Wailing humanity upon my knee.

CH. We see thou wilt not now destroy mankind.

DEM. What I could do to save man was my thought.

And, since my love was center'd in the boy, 790
 My thought was first for him, to rescue him;
 That, thro' my providence, he ne'er should know
 Suffering, nor disease, nor fear of death.
 Therefore I fed him on immortal food,
 And should have gain'd my wish, so well he throve,
 But by ill-chance it hapt, once, as I held him
 Bathed in the fire at midnight (as was my wont),—
 His mother stole upon us, and ascare
 At the strange sight, screaming in loud dismay
 Compel'd me to unmask, and leave for ever 800
 The halls of Keleos, and my work undone.

CH. 'Twas pity that she came!—Didst thou not
 grieve to lose
 The small Demophoön?—Couldst thou not save him?

DEM. I had been blinded. Think ye for yourselves . . .

What vantage were it to mankind at large
 That one should be immortal,—if all beside
 Must die and suffer misery as before?

CH. Nay, truly. And great envy borne to one
 So favour'd might have more embitter'd all. 809

DEM. I had been foolish. My sojourn with men
 Had warpt my mind with mortal tenderness.

So, questioning myself what real gift
 I might bestow on man to help his state,
 I saw that sorrow was his life-companion,
 To be embrac't bravely, not weakly shun'd:
 That as by toil man winneth happiness,
 Thro' tribulation he must come to peace.
 How to make sorrow his friend then,—this my task.
 Here was a mystery . . . and how persuade
 This thorny truth? . . . Ye do not hearken me. 820

CH. Yea, honour'd goddess, yea, we hearken still:
 Stint not thy tale.

DEM. Ye might not understand.
 My tale to you must be a tale of deeds—
 How first I bade King Keleos build for me
 A temple in Eleusis, and ordain'd
 My worship, and the mysteries of my thought;
 Where in the sorrow that I underwent
 Man's state is pattern'd; and in picture shewn
 The way of his salvation. . . . Now with me
 —Here is a matter grateful to your ears— 830
 Your lov'd Persephone hath equal honour,
 And in the spring her festival of flowers:
 And if she should return . . . [*Listening.*

Ah! hark! what hear I?

CH. We hear no sound.

DEM. Hush ye! Hermes: he comes.

CH. What hearest thou?

DEM. Hermes; and not alone.
She is there. 'Tis she: I have won.

CH. Where? where?

DEM. (*aside*) Ah! can it be that out of sorrow's
night,
From tears, from yearning pain, from long despair,
Into joy's sunlight I shall come again?—

Aside! stand ye aside! 840

Enter Hermes leading Persephone.

HER. Mighty Demeter, lo! I execute
The will of Zeus and here restore thy daughter.

DEM. I have won.

PER. Sweet Mother, thy embrace is as the welcome
Of all the earth, thy kiss the breath of life.

DEM. Ah! but to me, Cora! Thy voice again...
My tongue is trammel'd with excess of joy.

PER. Arise, my nymphs, my Oceanides!
My Nereids all, arise! and welcome me!
Put off your strange solemnity! arise! 850

CH. Welcome! all welcome, fair Persephone!

(1) We came to welcome thee, but fell abash'd
Seeing thy purple robe and crystal crown.

PER. Arise and serve my pleasure as of yore.

DEM. And thou too doff thy strange solemnity,

That all may see thee as thou art, my Cora,
Restor'd and ever mine. Put off thy crown!

PER. Awhile! dear Mother—what thou sayst is
true;

I am restor'd to thee, and evermore
Shall be restor'd. Yet am I none the less 860
Evermore Queen of Hades: and 'tis meet
I wear the crown, the symbol of my reign.

DEM. What words are these, my Cora! Ever-
more

Restor'd to me thou sayst . . . 'tis well—but then
Evermore Queen of Hades . . . what is this?
I had a dark foreboding till I saw thee;
Alas, alas! it lives again: destroy it!
Solve me this riddle quickly, if thou mayest.

PER. Let Hermes speak, nor fear thou. All is
well. 869

HER. Divine Demeter, thou hast won thy will,
And the command of Zeus have I obey'd.
Thy daughter is restor'd, and evermore
Shall be restor'd to thee as on this day.
But Hades holding to his bride, the Fates
Were kind also to him, that she should be
His queen in Hades as thy child on earth.
Yearly, as spring-tide cometh, she is thine
While flowers bloom and all the land is gay;

But when thy corn is gather'd, and the fields
 Are bare, and earth withdraws her budding life 880
 From the sharp bite of winter's angry fang,
 Yearly will she return and hold her throne
 With great Aidoneus and the living dead :
 And she hath eaten with him of such fruit
 As holds her his true bride for evermore.

DEM. Alas! alas!

PER. Rejoice, dear Mother. Let not vain lament
 Trouble our joy this day, nor idle tears.

DEM. Alas! from my own deed my trouble comes :
 He gave thee of the fruit which I had curs'd : 890
 I made the poison that enchanted thee.

PER. Repent not in thy triumph, but rejoice,
 Who hast thy will in all, as I have mine.

DEM. I have but half my will, how hast thou
 more?

PER. It was my childish fancy (thou rememb'rest),
 I would be goddess of the flowers : I thought
 That men should innocently honour me
 With bloodless sacrifice and spring-tide joy.
 Now Fate, that look'd contrary, hath fulfill'd
 My project with mysterious efficacy : 900
 And as a plant that yearly dieth down
 When summer is o'er, and hideth in the earth,
 Nor showeth promise in its wither'd leaves

That it shall reawaken and put forth
 Its blossoms any more to deck the spring ;
 So I, the mutual symbol of my choice,
 Shall die with winter, and with spring revive.
 How without winter could I have my spring ?
 How come to resurrection without death ?
 Lo thus our joyful meeting of to-day, 910
 Born of our separation, shall renew
 Its annual ecstasy, by grief refresh't :
 And no more pall than doth the joy of spring
 Yearly returning to the hearts of men.
 See then the accomplishment of all my hope :
 Rejoice, and think not to put off my crown.

DEM. What hast thou seen below to reconcile thee
 To the dark moiety of thy strange fate ?

PER. Where have I been, mother ? what have I
 seen ?

The downward pathway to the gates of death : 920
 The skeleton of earthly being, stript
 Of all disguise : the sudden void of night :
 The spectral records of unwholesome fear :—
 Why was it given to me to see these things ?
 The ruin'd godheads, disesteem'd, condemn'd
 To toil of deathless mockery : conquerors
 In the reverse of glory, doom'd to rule
 The multitudinous army of their crimes :

The naked retribution of all wrong :—

Why was it given to me to see such things? 930

DEM. Not without terror, as I think, thou speakest,
Nor as one reconcil'd to brook return.

PER. But since I have seen these things, with salt
and fire

My spirit is purged, and by this crystal crown
Terror is tamed within me. If my words

Seem'd to be tinged with terror, 'twas because

I knew one hour of terror (on the day

That took me hence) and with that memory

Colour'd my speech, using the terms which paint

The blindfold fears of men, who little reckon 940

How they by holy innocence and love,

By reverence and gentle lives may win

A title to the fair Elysian fields,

Where the good spirits dwell in ease and light

And entertainment of those fair desires

That made earth beautiful . . . brave souls that spent

Their lives for liberty and truth, grave seers

Whose vision conquer'd darkness, pious poets

Whose words have won Apollo's deathless praise,

Who all escape Hell's mysteries, nor come nigh 950

The Cave of Cacophysia.

DEM.

Mysteries!

What mysteries are these? and what the Cave?

PER. The mysteries of evil, and the cave
Of blackness that obscures them. Even in hell
The worst is hidden, and unfruitful night
Stifles her essence in her truthless heart.

DEM. What is the arch-falsity? I seek to know
The mystery of evil. Hast thou seen it?

PER. I have seen it. Could I truly rule my king-
dom
Not having seen it?

DEM. Tell me what it is. 960

PER. 'Tis not that I forget it; tho' the thought
Is banisht from me. But 'tis like a dream
Whose sense is an impression lacking words.

DEM. If it would pain thee telling . . .

PER. Nay, but surely
The words of gods and men are names of things
And thoughts accustom'd: but of things unknown
And unimagined are no words at all.

DEM. And yet will words sometimes outrun the
thought.

PER. What can be spoken is nothing: 'twere
a path 969
That leading t'ward some prospect ne'er arrived.

DEM. The more thou holdest back, the more I
long.

PER. The outward aspect only mocks my words.

DEM. Yet what is outward easy is to tell.

PER. Something is possible. This cavern lies
 In very midmost of deep-hollow'd hell
 O'er its torn mouth the black Plutonic rock
 Is split in sharp disorder'd pinnacles
 And broken ledges, whereon sit, like apes
 Upon a wither'd tree, the hideous sins
 Of all the world: once having seen within 980
 The magnetism is heavy on them, and they crawl
 Palsied with filthy thought upon the peaks;
 Or, squatting thro' long ages, have become
 Rooted like plants into the griping clefts:
 And there they pullulate, and moan, and strew
 The rock with fragments of their mildew'd growth.

DEM. Cora, my child! and hast thou seen these
 things!

PER. Nay but the outward aspect, figur'd thus
 In mere material loathsomness, is nought
 Beside the mystery that is hid within. 990

DEM. Search thou for words, I pray, somewhat to
 tell.

PER. Are there not matters past the thought of
 men
 Or gods to know?

DEM. Thou meanest wherefore things
 Should be at all? Or, if they be, why thus,

As hot, cold, hard and soft : and wherefore Zeus
 Had but two brothers ; why the stars of heaven
 Are so innumerable, constellated
 Just as they are ; or why this Sicily
 Should be three-corner'd ? Yes, thou sayest well,
 Why things are as they are, nor gods nor men 1000
 Can know. We say that Fate appointed thus,
 And are content.—

PER. Suppose, dear Mother, there wer' a temple
 in heaven,
 Which, dedicated to the unknown Cause
 And worship of the unseen, had power to draw
 All that was worthy and good within its gate :
 And that the spirits who enter'd there became
 Not only purified and comforted,
 But that the mysteries of the shrine were such,
 That the initiated bathed in light 1010
 Of infinite intelligence, and saw
 The meaning and the reason of all things,
 All at a glance distinctly, and perceived
 The origin of all things to be good,
 And the énd good, and that what appears as evil
 Is as a film of dust, that falln thereon,
 May,—at one stroke of the hand,—
 Be brush'd away, and show the good beneath,
 Solid and fair and shining : If moreover

And so I waited, till a forking flash
 Of sudden lightning dazzlingly reveal'd
 All at a glance. As on a pitchy night
 The warder of some high acropolis
 Looks down into the dark, and suddenly
 Sees all the city with its roofs and streets,
 Houses and walls, clear as in summer noon,
 And ere he think of it, 'tis dark again,— 1050
 So I saw all within the Cave, and held
 The vision, 'twas so burnt upon my sense.

DEM. What saw'st thou, child? what saw'st thou?

PER. Nay, the things

Not to be told, because there are no words
 Of gods or men to paint the inscrutable
 And full initiation of hell.—I saw
 The meaning and the reason of all things,
 All at a glance, and in that glance perceiv'd
 The origin of all things to be evil,
 And the énd evil: that what seems as good 1060
 Is as a bloom of gold that spread thereo'er
 May, by one stroke of the hand,
 Be brush'd away, and leave the ill beneath
 Solid and foul and black. . . .

DEM. Now tell me, child,
 If Hades love thee, that he sent thee thither.

PER. He said it coud not harm me: and I think

It hath not. [*Going up to Demeter, who kisses her.*

DEM. Nay it hath not, . . . and I know
 The power of evil is no power at all
 Against eternal good. 'Tis fire on water,
 As darkness against sunlight, like a dream 1070
 To waken'd will. Foolish was I to fear
 That aught could hurt thee, Cora. But to-day
 Speak we no more. . . . This mystery of Hell
 Will do me service : I'll not tell thee now :
 But sure it is that Fate o'erruleth all
 For good or ill : and we (no more than men)
 Have power to oppose, nor any will nor choice
 Beyond such wisdom as a fisher hath
 Who driven by sudden gale far out to sea
 Handles his fragile boat safe thro' the waves, 1080
 Making what harbour the wild storm allows.

To-day hard-featured and inscrutable Fate
 Stands to mine eyes reveal'd, nor frowns upon me.
 I thought to find thee as I knew thee, and fear'd
 Only to find thee sorrowful : I find thee
 Far other than thou wert, nor hurt by Hell.
 I thought I must console thee, but 'tis thou
 Playest the comforter : I thought to teach thee,
 And had prepared my lesson, word by word ;
 But thou art still beyond me. One thing only 1090
 Of all my predetermin'd plan endures :

My purpose was to bid thee to Eleusis
 For thy spring festival, which three days hence
 Inaugurates my temple. Thou wilt come ?

PER. I come. And art thou reconcil'd, dear Mother ?

DEM. Joy and surprise make tempest in my mind ;
 When their bright stir is o'er, there will be peace.
 But ere we leave this flowery field, the scene
 Of strange and beauteous memories evermore,
 I thank thee, Hermes, for thy willing service. 1100

PER. I thank thee, son of Maia, and bid farewell.

HER. Have thy joy now, great Mother ; and have
 thou joy,
 Fairest Persephone, Queen of the Spring.

CHORUS.

Fair Persephone, garlands we bring thee,
 Flow'rs and spring-tide welcome sing thee.

Hades held thee not,

Darkness quell'd thee not.

Gay and joyful welcome !

Welcome, Queen, evermore.

Earth shall own thee,

1110

Thy nymphs crown thee,

Garland thee and crown thee,

Crown thee Queen evermore.



NOTES

THIS mask was written in 1904 at the request of the ladies of Somerville College, Oxford, and was acted by them at the inauguration of their new buildings in that year. The present edition is for the use of others who wish to perform it, and the following notes are intended for their assistance.

p. 4. *Dramatis Personæ*. If the actors are few, the parts of Hades and Demeter may be taken by the same actor, as may also the parts of Artemis and Hermes. There is no need for the actor who speaks the prologue to appear in the confusion at the end of the first act: a substitute will serve. The prologue is by itself a very thankless part for such an actor as it requires. The leader of the Chorus has an important rôle.

ACT I.

p. 8. For the metre of the chorus see pp. 65, 66.

p. 10. Athena and Artemis have their appropriate dresses. It is necessary that Artemis should be represented as the huntress, and wear the short

chlamys and hunting sandals. Persephone is dressed as a Greek girl, and her part throughout the first act is girlish: her answers to Athena are playful. In the third act her dress and manner are changed.

ACT II.

p. 20. There are two speakers or singers alternating in the first six lines. The dashes show the divisions of the chorus throughout: that is, the sections between the dashes may be taken by different speakers; but it is not necessary, except in the first six lines, that they should be.

p. 22. Chorus II. This metre is the invention of George Darley.

p. 23. In the dialogue the Chorus is usually represented by the leader speaking alone. Where dashes occur, as on p. 24, it is intended that others should join in and give the impression of their all speaking.

p. 24. Demeter's account of her wanderings, though intended for the nymphs to hear, is not a narration for their benefit, but is rather spoken away from them. Their presence determines the form in which Demeter unburdens her grief by utterance.

p. 27, l. 477. Demeter's good nature is touched by the simple kind feeling of the nymphs, and she

suddenly changes her attitude towards them to a gracious condescension.

p. 28, l. 484. Demeter has her hair flowing over her shoulders, so that the jewel should be on a pendent chain attached to the necklace (which she cannot remove), in order that she may be able to hold it far enough from her for the nymphs to see without their crowding too near.

p. 29, l. 518. Demeter becomes passionate again: but in her proper character unaffected by grief.

p. 31, l. 563. Hermes' speech betrays the awkwardness of his mission. The first line is a sapphic; and there are some rough hexameters hidden in the blank verse to disturb it.

p. 33. Chorus. This chorus must exhibit confusion. From the words 'What can we do?' down to 'Harken! there's nought so light,' the nymphs are talking in disorder among themselves, and their leader is trying to gain their attention. After her speech there is some return to confusion before the song.

ACT III.

pp. 36, 37. For the metres see pp. 65, 66.

p. 39. Demeter's relation of the Eleusinian episode of her wanderings is told directly to the

nymphs, whom she allows to come about her to listen. When they interrupt her she shows no more impatience than can be expressed by the marked resumption of the tone and cadence of her narrative, as shown in the places where she repeats herself after the interruption.

p. 42. The nymphs having become interested, Demeter attempts to lead their sympathy further than they can follow.

p. 43, l. 833. There are here pauses for listening and suspense.

p. 44, l. 840. Demeter motions the nymphs to stand aside on either hand. They group and she attitudinizes.

Hermes enters (right) rather in advance of Persephone, leading her with his left hand. When he begins to speak Persephone comes forward leaving hold of his hand. Demeter gazes for a moment on Persephone, and then suddenly hurries to her, saying, 'I have won,' not waiting for the end of Hermes' speech, and leaving him unattended to. She embraces Persephone for some time with her head on Persephone's shoulder to hide her emotion. Then Persephone slowly disengages herself from the embrace until the two stand face to face, holding each other's hands.

The Chorus, on seeing Persephone in character as Queen of Hades, prostrate themselves in their ranks.

l. 847. So much realism is here intended as this, namely that Demeter should show that she cannot trust herself to speak without undignified betrayal of her great emotion. Persephone perceiving this would give her mother a chance of recovering herself by addressing the nymphs.

l. 850. The nymphs arise.

p. 45, l. 857. Demeter motions to take off Persephone's crown: Persephone motions her back.

p. 49, l. 961. Persephone's hesitation is due to inability to explain, not to terror.

p. 53, l. 1056. Persephone speaks very slowly.

p. 55. Persephone in bidding Hermes farewell extends to him her left hand (reversing the attitude in which she had entered) which Hermes touches with his right. Demeter at the same moment offers to Persephone her left to lead her away. In this position the nymphs surround them and crown Persephone with their wreaths and garlands, almost covering her; at the same time singing their chorus.

SPELLING, ACCENTS, AND METRES

A distinguished critic having unreservedly condemned my habit of occasionally using Greek accents to determine the pronunciation of certain syllables in the verse, I subjoin some explanation in my defence. I use these accents merely as a guide to the reader to prevent his giving a wrong accent in places where there is, at least on first reading, a possible choice of pronunciation.

The ambiguity is generally due to the absence of any fixed rule or practice, concerning the use of the enclitic accent in English. For instance on p. 8, l. 64, the word *when* is accented to shew that *he* is enclitic or proclitic and consequently a short syllable. If this were not shewn, it would be quite as natural for some readers to stress the verse thus

Poséidon's cháriot, when hé rebúkes the wáves,
which would make *he* a long syllable, as *me* is in the next line,

But no country to mé,

where the accent on *me* shews that it is not enclitic in that place. Milton sometimes distinguishes the accented *me* by a double *e*, printing *mee* for *me*.

Again on p. 6, l. 21, the circumflex accent on *there* distinguishes the word from the unaccented

there which often occurs before *had*: as in such a sentence as this, *Without the accent there had been an ambiguity*; in which sentence *there* is an unaccented syllable, which would be classically short with a trilled *r* before a weak aspirate, and might be written *thér' ad.*

I do not myself see that English accentuation differs much from the Greek. If a consistent phonetic spelling of English were to be introduced, we should find that many words would be quite unrecognizable without accents, and that the Greek accents would serve us very well to express our traditional pronunciation. I should suppose that *pérfume* and *perfùme* correspond in their accent almost exactly with *ἄγων* and *ἀγών*. The difficulty that English scholars find in understanding how a Greek trisyllable can be accented on a short penultimate, like *σοφία* and *πραγμάτων*, or on the antepenultimate if the penultima is long, like *βούλεσθαι* and *ἄγουσαν*, can be due only to their confusing accent with quantity: for there are plenty of English words in the same condition. The following fifteen words are all from the first page of Gibbon that I opened on: these nine are of the *σοφία* class, inherit, possession, ambition, successor, suspicious, forgotten, impression, acknowledge, encourage: these other six are all of

the βούλεσθαι class, peaceably, character, monārchy, frequently, govērnment, majēsty; and such conditions seem to be common to English and Greek: one must of course not be misled by the spelling in the first class; and in the second class the consonants must be pronounced distinctly. These are but chance words; more extreme examples might be found; for instance, lánguīshment, mágīstrate.

Again, our circumflex accent would not only correspond with the classical definition of the Greek circumflex, being a wavering in pitch of the voice on the syllable, but even the rule, which seemed so arbitrary at school,—that if the circumflex be on a penultima, then the last syllable must be short, while if that syllable be lengthened, the circumflex will be changed to an acute,—has a tendency to be observed in English. Certainly everybody says *dôwn* and *dôwnŷ*, but *dównfáll* and *dównwārd̄s*. This example at least is unquestionable and seems to shew the rule to be a natural law of speech.

I should add that the grave accent which I have sometimes printed on the last syllable of past participles is not of course a Greek accent: it is merely intended to shew that the last syllable is pronounced as written, as in *veilēd*, p. 36: a consistent spelling would make such a mark unnecessary.

The choruses on pages 8, 9, 36 and 37 are in Greek metres, and in William Stone's phonetic prosody, the rules of which have been given elsewhere. In line 88 *violet* occurs with the first syllable short: this is in opposition to his general rules, which he wished to be tested and corrected. There is no doubt that the \bar{i} is here short, though it is a diphthong and accented; and the fact that an accented diphthong may retain its full vocal quality, and yet be short in English when it is followed by a vowel, seems to explain another of the obstacles to the understanding of Greek prosody. At least I can say for myself that I could never get any explanation of the principle on which such syllables became short in Greek, whether the quality of the diphthong was changed when it was shortened by position. The English word *violet*,—the ordinary pronunciation of which is altered and disfigured if the diphthong is at all produced beyond common shortness,—is a plain illustrative example, which makes away with all difficulty.

As Stone predicted, practice soon teaches one readily to measure the length of syllables by ear: and though I was very stupid at first, I now no more question the actual length of a syllable when I listen to it, than I do the phase of the moon when I look at it.

The chorus on pp. 8, 9, is in the Choriambic metre of

Maecenas atavis edite regibus

— — | — ∪ ∪ — | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪ ∪

the last line of each section is

∪ ∪ — | — ∪ ∪ — | ∪

The rhymes in the second section are a freak: they exhibit an experiment.

In the chorus in Act III, p. 38, the song is in Alcaics. The word *Aerial*, in the fourth line, is variously pronounced. I pronounce the first three syllables with the vowels of *slavery*, and this pronunciation is required here.

The ode is in Iambics; which I have found, as I anticipated, the most difficult classical metre to represent in English. The combination of longer and shorter lines is used by Horace—e.g. Epode II. 2.

I had almost forgotten my worst offences. The spellings *coud* and *delite* are only my feeble and infinitesimal protest against the vulgar tyranny. If everybody would spell a few words freely, our chains might be broken. Consistency is of course impossible, for no one would read a book in which there were many unconventional spellings. Indeed I doubt if there are many educated persons above forty years of age who *COUD*.

R. B.

Oxford, *April* 1905


The actors in the first performance of this play.

DEMETER.	Henrietta Caroline Escreet.
PERSEPHONE.	Octavia Mariana Myers.
ARTEMIS.	Christiana Elizabeth Jeffery.
ATHENA.	Sylvia Lovell Peters.
AIDONEUS.	Edith Ryley Pearson.
HERMES.	Helen Gregory.

Chorus of Oceanides.

LEADER. Theodora de Sélincourt.

Olive Clara Coldwell.
Emilia Stuart Lorimer.
Florence Mary Glen Lorimer.
Eveline Jane Edmonds.
Beatrice Louise Terry.
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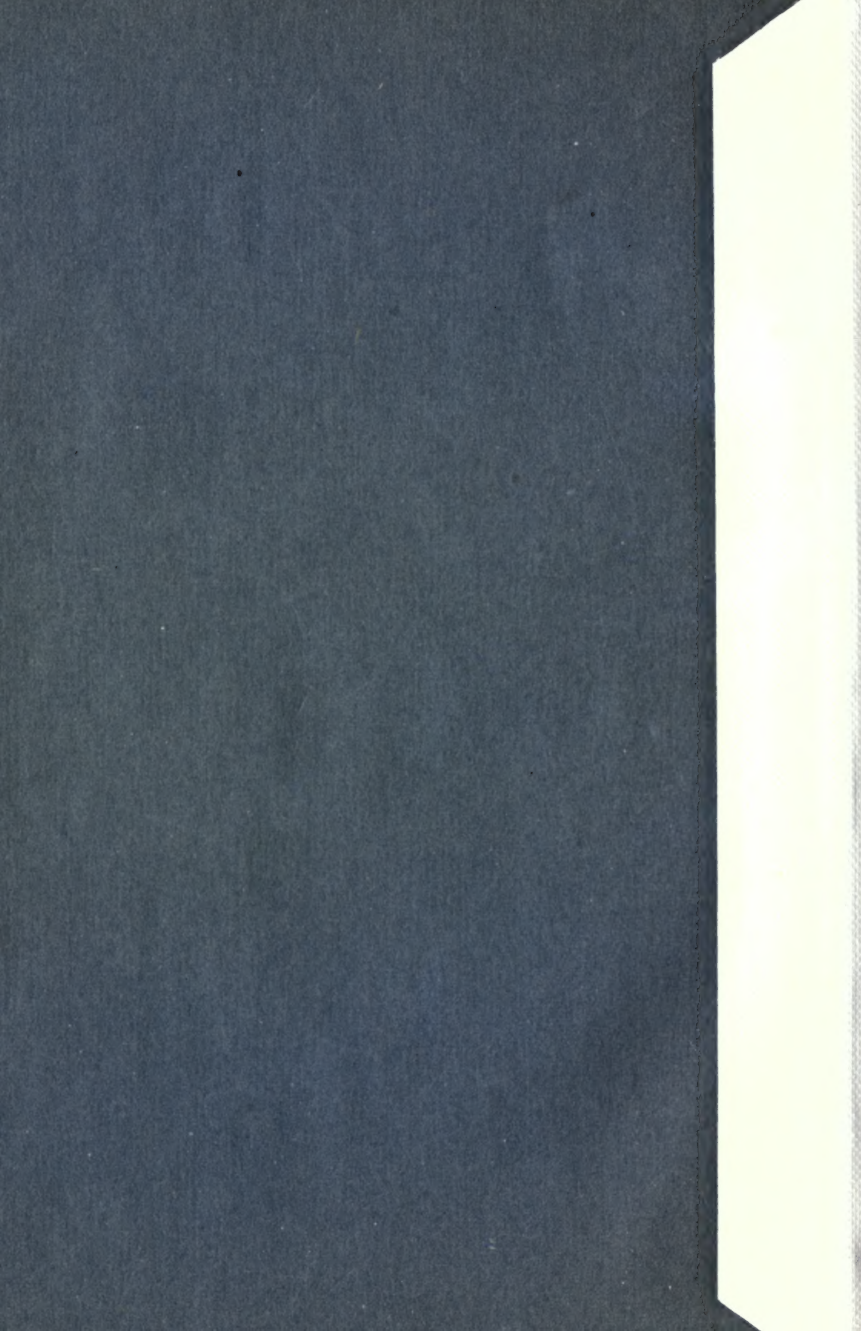
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